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CORRESPONDENCE

SHENSTONE ON RICHARDSON'S *Pamela**To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.*

SIRS :—In reading a volume of the poet Shenstone's letters,¹ recently, I came upon what appears to be a significant reference to the first one of our great modern English novels, Richardson's *Pamela*. The first two letters of the volume are addressed to one of the poet's life-long, intimate friends, Richard Jago, and both are from the year 1739. But the second letter bears the superscription or title "To the same, in the Manner of Pamela," and is intended, after a brief introduction, to reproduce a conversation between Shenstone and his housekeeper, Mrs. Arnold, in imitation of one of Richardson's dialogues between Mrs. Jewkes and Mr. B. The first part of the letter is as follows :

"Well! and so I sat me down in my room, and was reading *Pamela*—one might furnish this book with several pretty decorations, thought I to myself; and then I began to design cuts for it, in particular places. For instance, one, where Pamela is forced to fall upon her knees in the arbour: a second, where she is in bed, and Mrs. Jewkes holds one hand, and Mr. B. the other: a third, where Pamela sits sewing in the summer-house, &c. So I just sketched them out, and sent my little hints, such as they were, to Mr. R—n. As soon as I had sealed my letter, in comes Mrs. Arnold—. 'Well, Mrs. Arnold, says I, this Mr. Jago never comes—what can one do? I'm as dull as a beetle for want of company.' 'Sir, says she, the hen—' 'What makes you out of breath? says I, Mrs. Arnold,' " etc.

Ever since the appearance of Mrs. Barbauld's *Biographical Account* of Richardson,² students of Richardson have been committed to 1740 as the year in which his first novel was published. Indeed, the following from Richardson's own account of the origin of *Pamela* as first printed by Mrs. Barbauld might seem to fix the exact date beyond question :

"While I was writing the two volumes my worthy hearted wife and the young lady who is with us, when I had read them some part of the story, which I had begun without their knowing it, used to come into my little closet every night with: 'Have you any more of *Pamela*, Mr. Richardson? We are come to hear a little more of *Pamela*, etc.' This encouraged me to prosecute it, which I did so diligently, through all my other business, that by a memorandum on my copy I

began it November 10, 1739, and finished it January 10, 1740."³

It is of course possible that Mrs. Barbauld made some mistake in copying the manuscript, for "she is not," as Miss Thomson says, "invariably correct." It is however rather improbable that she did not reproduce the manuscript in this instance exactly. Nevertheless, it is to be regretted that Miss Thomson, who apparently had access to the original, did not at least collate Mrs. Barbauld's reprint of such letters as she quoted with the author's own manuscript.⁴

It is of course not impossible that Richardson himself was in error as to the exact date of the completion of *Pamela*. The account of the origin of his first novel was apparently written several years after the publication of the book, but he had the "memorandum on the copy" to assist him in fixing the date.

In spite of the good work of Austin Dobson⁵ and Miss Thomson, there still seems to be considerable obscurity about the exact date of the publication of *Pamela*. It is, for instance, difficult to understand how a book as popular as *Pamela* was could be in circulation for about two months before it attracted the notice of the reviewers. It is recorded in the "Register of Books" of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for November, 1740, as number 18 in the list: "*Pamela; or Virtue rewarded*. Printed for C. Rivington in 2 Vols. 12mo. Price 6 s." But the December (1740) issue of the magazine contains no reference to it, and in the January (1741) number the editor inserts a note at the end of the "Register of Books" saying that

"Several encomiums on a series of *Familiar Letters* publish'd but last month, entitled *Pamela, or Virtue rewarded*, came too late for this magazine, and we believe there will be little occasion for inserting them in our next; because a second edition will then come out to supply the demands in the country, it being judged in town as great a sign of want of curiosity not to have read *Pamela*, as not to have seen the French and Italian dancers."⁶

A second edition is then recorded in the register of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for February (1741) as number 46: "*Pamela; or, Virtue rewarded*. The 2^d Edition, with an Addition of some Extracts of Letters upon the Subject. Printed for C. Rivington. pr. 6 s." The

¹ See *Samuel Richardson, A Biographical and Critical Study*. By Clara Linklater Thomson. London, 1900, pp. 22–23.

² There is to be sure nothing in Miss Thomson's excellent book to show that she did not examine the originals in every case where it was possible.

³ *Samuel Richardson*. Eng. Men of Letters. London, 1902.

⁴ Cf. Dobson, pp. 30–31, where an exact reprint of the note is given.

¹ Vol. III of *Works in Verse and Prose*, London, Dodsley, 1777.

² Prefixed to her edition of *Richardson's Correspondence*, London, 1804.

third edition is recorded in March and the fourth in May, but the novel was apparently incomplete in all these early editions. For we find a record in the "Register of Books" for December, 1741 (No. 31) to this effect: "Pamela, vol. 3 and 4 by the author of the two first. pr. 6 s. Rivington."

Another question that suggests itself in this connection is: If Richardson actually finished the novel on January 10, 1740, why did he keep it for ten months before publishing it? It would hardly have required so much time to get the two volumes thru the press. One easy way out of the difficulty created by Shenstone's letter is, of course, to assume that the editor of his works (his good friend Dodsley) dated the letter wrong. The first four letters of the collection are in each case dated "1739," and the first two of these four, as noted above, are addressed to Mr. Jago and seem to belong together. Moreover, this is the only one of the 1739 letters which bears at the end the definite dating (of the author himself, we must think): "Leasowes, July 22."

The possible assumption that Shenstone might have read the story in manuscript would not mend matters, as there are no cogent reasons for supposing that the poet and the novelist were ever intimately associated as friends,—even if we granted that Richardson was mistaken in his own dates of composition (Nov. 10, 1739 to Jan. 10, 1740). Other references to Richardson (there are not many) in the letters throw no light on the question of the date of publication of *Pamela*. Writing to his friend Graves in 1743⁷ he says: "Pamela would have made one good volume; and I wonder the author, who has some nice natural strokes, should not have sense enough to see that." Once or twice he casually mentions *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, and we know from a letter to Percy written in the last year but one of his life that Shenstone was an ardent admirer of Richardson's. Speaking of a "pompous edition of Thomson's works"⁸ he asks Percy: "And does not his monument put you in mind of what the Publick owes to Mr. Richardson? For my own part, I never look into his works but with greater Admiration of his Genius—and then, if we regard the extensive good they were so well calculated to promote, there are few characters to whom the Nation may be said to owe greater Honours."

So far as I am aware, Shenstone's letter has not been noticed by any of Richardson's biographers and critics, tho the reference to *Pamela*, explicit as it is, if it does not prove that the novel was in circulation as early as July, 1739, makes it incumbent upon the student of Richardson to show beyond a doubt that the letter is incorrectly dated.

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A CO-INCIDENCE EXPLAINED.

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—In May 1909, I published in *Modern Language Notes* a paper on "Some Debts of Samuel Daniel to Du Bellay." The substance of this paper had appeared in an essay by Professor Kastner in the *Modern Language Review* of April, 1908, "The Elizabethan Sonneteers and the French Poets." What has the look of cool plagiarism was, however, in fact, an innocent co-incidence. My paper comprised part of a "report" made, in the course of the academic year 1907-1908, for Professor C. H. Page's course on French influence in the English Renaissance; a "report" which was read in that course before Professor Kastner's article was accessible here. Owing to press of work, I did not prepare the paper for publication until the following spring, when I sent it to *Modern Language Notes*. I myself, in making researches along other lines, discovered that Professor Kastner had anticipated me, and at once communicated with him. My explanation of the circumstances satisfied him, and I call attention to the co-incidence now only to spare possible students of this corner of a large subject any confusion in the matter.

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THE *Nibelungenlied* AND *Sir Beves of Hampton*

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—A striking and curious parallel with the *Nibelungenlied* has, in so far as I know, been passed over unnoticed by those editing or commenting on the Old French and Middle English versions of *Sir Beves of Hampton*. The likeness is between the *Beves* "Episode in Cologne" and the story of the wedding of Gunther and Brunhild.

The *Nibelungenlied*¹ describes the wedding with fervor; afterwards, it tells how attendant maids and men escort the bridal couple to their rest; how Brunhild proffers her first request to her lord, and on being refused, takes rude vengeance. She seizes her girdle, ties with it his feet and hands, and hangs him up to a nail on the wall. "Jâ het er ir krefte vil nâch gewûnnên den tût."

¹ Bartsch, *Das Nibelungenlied*, 636-8. Leipzig, 1886.